

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

## A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 228.—THIRD SERIES.

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1893.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

### A VALIANT IGNORANCE.

By MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

*Author of "Cross Currents," "A Mist of Error," "Her Inheritance," "A Social Success," "Kitty's Victim," "An Outstanding Debt," etc., etc.*

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

"You admire it, Mrs. Romayne? It strikes you as true? Ah, but that is very charming of you!"

A confused babel of voices—that curious, indefinable sound which is shrill, though its shrillness would be most difficult to trace; harsh, though it arises from the voices of well-bred men and women; and absolutely unmeaning—was filling the two rooms from end to end; and the soft light diffused by cleverly arranged lamps fell upon groups of smartly dressed women and men equally correct in their attire on male lines. It was about five o'clock, not a pleasant time on a gusty, sleety November afternoon if nature is allowed to have her own way; but inside these rooms it was impossible to do anything but ignore nature; the air was so soft and warm—faintly scented, too, with flowers—and the colour so rich and delicate. The rooms themselves were a curious hybrid between the fashionable and the artistic; that is to say, they were not arranged according to any conventional tenets, and there were various really beautiful hangings, "bits" of old brass, "bits" of old oak, and "bits" of old china about. But all these, though very cleverly arranged, were distinctly "posed." The larger of the two rooms was obviously a studio; rather too obviously, perhaps, since the fact was impressed by a certain superabundance of artistic prettinesses. Charming little arrangements in hangings, palms, or what not, "composed"

at every turn with the constantly shifting groups. The unconventionalism, in short, was as carefully arranged as was the attitude of the host of the hour as he stood leaning against a large easel, mysteriously curtained, talking to Mrs. Romayne. He was a painter, and a clever painter; he had married a clever wife, and as a result of the working of their respective brains towards the same goal he had become the fashion. "Everybody" went to "the Stormont-Eades' affairs," whether the affair in question was a little dinner, a little "evening," or a little tea-party—Mrs. Stormont-Eade always affixed the diminutive; consequently everybody was obliged to go; a fact which if carefully thought out will lead to some rather curious conclusions. And the little tea-parties, particularly in the winter, were considered particularly desirable functions. One of these tea-parties was going on now.

Mr. Stormont-Eade himself was a tall, good-looking man who had nearly succeeded, by dint of careful attention to his good points, in conveying the impression that he was a handsome man. He had fine eyes, really remarkably fine, as he was well aware, when they were earnest, and they were looking now with a deep intensity of meaning, which was their normal expression, into Mrs. Romayne's face; his mouth was not so admirable except when he smiled, and consequently his thin lips were slightly curved; his figure was too thin, and the touch of picturesqueness about his pose and about his velvet coat redeemed it; but his closely-curling hair was cut short and trim, and showed the excellent shape of his head to the best advantage. He had come up to Mrs. Romayne only a minute or two before at the conclusion of a song; a very little very fashionable music was

always a feature of the Stormont-Eades' entertainments, and "good people"—the phrase in this connection representing clever professionals possessed of the social ambition of the day—were glad to sing or play for them; and she had begun to speak of a little picture of his which was one of the themes of the moment.

Mrs. Romaine was dressed from head to foot in carefully harmonised shades of green—green was the colour of the season—with a good deal of soft black fur about it. Her bonnet became her to perfection; her face was so bright and animated, that in the soft light a certain haggard sharpness of contour was hardly perceptible. Her smiles and laughs as she exchanged greetings and chat were always ready; if they left her eyes quite untouched, her attention was apparently as free and disengaged as were the gay little gestures with which she emphasized her talk. There was absolutely nothing about her which could have suggested to the ordinary observer anything beyond the surface of finished society woman which she was presenting so brightly to the world. But on the previous evening she had had a note from Falconer, written immediately after his interview with "the girl," telling her only that he was to have a second interview, and would see her on the following day. That day was now drawing to a close, and she had as yet heard nothing further.

"It enchanted me!" she said now, with a little graceful, emphatic gesture. "But then your things always do enchant me, you know! By-the-bye, people say that you are going to do a big picture. I hope that is not so? Little bits are so much more fascinating."

Mr. Stormont-Eade smiled—the tender, comprehending smile that was one of his charms.

"No, it is not true," he said. "One is so fettered with a large work, but little things represent the inspiration, the feeling of the moment. If they have any value, it lies in that." They had a distinct financial value, though it is doubtful whether the dealers would have recognised the source.

"Ah, the feeling of the moment!" said Mrs. Romaine with pretty fervour. "That is what one so seldom gets, isn't it? And it is so delightful!"

Then she broke off with a charming smile to shake hands with Mrs. Halse, brought by the constant shifting of the groups into her vicinity. Mrs. Romaine

was an excellent listener, and reputed a good talker, though she had probably never said a witty or a clever thing in her life; but she was never exclusive; she was always, so to speak, more or less in touch with the whole room, and ready to extend her circle.

"I've been making for you for hours," she said gaily. "Ah!" The word was an exclamation of pleased surprise as she suddenly became aware of a girl's figure behind Mrs. Halse; a girl's figure much better dressed than had been its wont, and very erect, with a latent touch of triumph and excitement on the pretty face. It was Miss Hilda Newton.

"I did not know you were in London," went on Mrs. Romaine, holding out her hand with gracious cordiality.

"She is staying with me on most important business," said Mrs. Halse. Mrs. Halse had accommodated herself to her increasing portliness by this time, and had apparently thought it necessary to increase the exuberance of her manner proportionately. Her voice, and the laugh with which she spoke, were equally loud. "Trousseau, you must know. She is to be married directly after Christmas. And when I heard it I wrote and said she'd better come straight to me, and then I could see that she got the right things. Of course, as she's to live in town, she must have the right things, you know."

"Of course," assented Mrs. Romaine gaily and airily. "And you are very busy?"

The last words were addressed to Hilda Newton, whose hand Mrs. Romaine still held. There was a curious mixture of resentment, defiance, and triumph in the girl's face as she confronted the suave, smiling countenance of the older woman, which just touched her voice as she answered:

"Very busy, indeed!"

She was conscious of a desire so to frame her answer as to suggest the position in society which was to be hers on her marriage, but she could think of no words in which to do it.

"And where is Master Julian?" broke in Mrs. Halse. Delicacy and tact had never been more than names with her; as her fibre, mental and physical, coarsened, she was beginning to think it quite unnecessary to maintain even a bowing acquaintance with these qualities; and her strident voice expressed a great deal that Hilda Newton would like to have expressed.

"He must be made to come and offer his congratulations—or perhaps Hilda will compound with him for a particularly handsome wedding-present. He knows Talbot Compton, of course? Otherwise, they must be introduced."

"He is not here this afternoon, I'm sorry to say," returned his mother, smiling. Mr. Stormont-Eade, if he could have recognised "the feeling of the moment" in this particular crisis, might have learnt a lesson on several points. "He has turned into a tremendously hard worker, you know. An astonishing fact, isn't it? I tell him he has secret intentions of taking the bench by storm."

She was laughing—a little musical, unmeaning laugh—and looking idly away across the room, when quite suddenly she stopped. Just inside the doorway, shaking hands with Mrs. Stormont-Eade, and having evidently just arrived, was Dennis Falconer, and as she caught sight of him there flashed into her eyes, through all the superficial brightness of her face, something which was like nothing but a sheer agony of hunger. It came in an instant, and it was gone in an instant. As he turned away from his hostess and caught her eye, she made him a light gesture and smile of greeting, and turned again to Mrs. Halse; and Mrs. Halse was not even conscious of a pause.

"It's almost too astonishing, don't you know!" said that vociferous lady with a laugh. "I don't half believe in these sudden transformations. If I were you I should make him produce his work every night for inspection. It's my belief he is getting into mischief. These hard-working young men are such frauds!"

She laughed loudly, and at that moment accident brought Falconer, on his way across the room, to a standstill a few paces from her. He had evidently intended to pass the little group, but Mrs. Halse frustrated his intention. With a peremptory gesture she claimed his attention, and as he drew nearer, she said boisterously:

"Now, don't you agree with me, Mr. Falconer? Aren't these good, hard-working boys the greatest scamps going?"

Falconer was looking very severe and impassive; he shook hands with Mrs. Halse, and then turned perforce to Mrs. Romaine, taking her hand with an almost solemn gravity, which contrasted sharply with the careless gaiety with which she extended it.

"I didn't expect to see you this after-

noon," she said lightly. "Stupid of me, though; every one comes to the Stormont-Eades."

"I did not expect to meet you," he answered sternly. "I have called at Queen Anne Street."

He had been astounded at not finding her at home. He was distinctly of opinion that afternoon teas were not for a woman who should be sitting in sackcloth and ashes, and the sight of her had shocked not only his sense of propriety, but some deeper sense of the reality of the crisis at which he was assisting. Perhaps Mrs. Romaine understood that her presence at the "little tea-party" scandalised him, for there was a strange, bitter little smile on her lips before she turned to Mrs. Halse, and said, with a rather hard, strained ring in her gay voice:

"You'll get no support from my cousin, I assure you, Mrs. Halse. He was a most praiseworthy——"

Her voice was drowned in a ringing chord on the piano, and as the prelude to a song filled the room, she made a mocking gesture expressive of the impossibility of making herself heard; and turning her face towards the singer, as she stood by Falconer's side, she composed herself to listen. Her face grew rather set and fixed in its lines of animated attention as the song went on, and when it ceased, her comments were of the indefinitely delighted order. She made them very easily and brightly, however, and then she turned carelessly to Falconer.

"Are you thinking of staying long?" she said lightly. "I rather want to talk to you, do you know—this unfortunate man is my man of business, you must know, Mrs. Halse—and I thought perhaps that I could drive you somewhere."

"I shall be happy to go whenever you like," was the grave answer.

Mrs. Romaine laughed lightly.

"Oh, I don't want to take you away immediately!" she said. "You've only just come, I'm afraid. In a little while!" She smiled and nodded to him, and to Mrs. Halse and Miss Newton, and moved away to speak to some other people.

About a quarter of an hour later Falconer, who was a somewhat grim ornament to society in the interval, saw her coming smiling towards him.

"Ready!" she said. "That's very nice of you! Suppose we go, then?"

He followed her out of the room and down the stairs, her flow of comments and

laughter never ceasing; put her into her carriage, and got in himself.

"Home!" she said sharply to the coachman. The door banged, they rolled away into the darkness and the wet, and her voice stopped suddenly.

They rolled along for a few minutes in total silence. Shut up alone with her like that, the isolation and quiet following so suddenly on the crowd and noise of a moment before, Falconer's only conscious feeling was one of almost stupid discomfort. Her sudden silence, too, had an indefinable but very unpleasant effect upon him. At last he said with awkward displeasure:

"I was going to write to you! I——"

She lifted her hand quickly and stopped him.

"When we get in!" she said in a quick, tense voice. "You can come in? It is just six. It need not take long."

"I am quite at your service."

She leant back in her corner with a sharp breath of relief, and neither moved nor spoke again until the carriage drew up at her own door.

She opened the door with a latch-key, and moved quickly across the hall to the foot of the stairs, motioning to Falconer to follow her. Then she stopped abruptly and turned. A servant was just crossing the hall to the dining-room, where the preliminary preparation for a dinner-party could be seen.

"Is Mr. Julian in?" said Mrs. Romayne sharply.

"Not yet, ma'am."

"If he should come in before I go to dress tell him that I am engaged."

She turned again and went on to the drawing-room.

"Now!" she said in a breathless peremptory monosyllable, facing Falconer as he shut the door. All trace of artificiality had dropped away from her, scorched away, as it seemed, in the fire of her intolerable suspense. Scorched into nothingness also was that subtle influence which Falconer's personality had always seemed to exercise over her. That strange defiance of him, that determined repudiation of all connection with him, except on the most trivial grounds, had vanished utterly. It was as though a woman conscious of a drawn sword hanging over her head should fight against and passionately deny the reflection of her danger in an onlooker's eyes until the sword had fallen; then, at very death-grip with the supreme reality, should pass beyond the

power of any lesser fear or pain to chill or touch. She did not attempt to sit down herself or to invite Falconer to do so. All her senses seemed to be absorbed in the hard, desperate anxiety with which her face was sharp and haggard. She looked ten years older than she had looked in Mr. Stormont-Eade's studio. Falconer answered her directly with no preliminary formalities, but with stiff disapprobation, as if such directness was involuntary on his part.

"I saw the—the young woman yesterday," he began; "but I was unable to bring about any arrangement. I gave her twenty-four hours for consideration, and this afternoon I called to see her again."

"Yes, yes!"

"I found that she had left the house this morning, leaving no address."

"Left!" The erect, tense figure confronting him staggered back a step as though a heavy blow had fallen upon it, and Mrs. Romayne caught desperately at the back of a chair. "Left—and you don't know where she is? You've settled nothing? We've no hold over her!"

The words had come from her in hoarse, gasping sentences, each one growing in intensity until the last vibrated with an agony of very despair, but Falconer's face grew grimmer as he listened. How it was he could not have told, but a strange, uncomfortable remembrance of the girl he had seen on the previous day, which had haunted him at more or less inopportune moments ever since, seemed to rise now and accentuate all his usual antagonism to the woman who was talking of her.

"I think you need not distress yourself," he said stiffly. "Perhaps I had better tell you at once that your son knows no more of her whereabouts than we do."

The drawn look of despair relaxed on Mrs. Romayne's haggard face; relaxed into an agony of questioning doubt.

"Doesn't know?" she said sharply.

"Julian doesn't know?"

"The landlady of the house," continued Falconer, "a very unpleasant and loquacious woman, was eager to inform me that on the arrival of your son yesterday afternoon, about an hour after I saw the young woman, there was a quarrel between them—that he left the house in anger. To-day, very shortly before my arrival, he returned and was astonished to find that the young woman was gone. He demanded her address, and was furious to



find that it was not known. I think there is no room for doubt that the young woman has left him!"

The colour was coming back to Mrs. Romayne's face slowly and in burning patches, and her clutch on the chair was almost convulsive.

"Left him!" she said under her breath. "Left him!" There was a moment's pause, and then she said in a harsh, high-pitched, concentrated tone: "Do you mean—for good? Why? Why should she?"

"I am sorry to have to say it to you," said Falconer slowly, but repelled from the woman to whom he spoke by the remembrance of the woman to whom his thoughts would return, "but I fear the case against your son is even blacker than it appears on the surface. I think it more than possible that he deceived the young woman."

The slowly-formed conviction—and it became conviction only as he spoke the words—was the result of that vague and disturbing impression made on Falconer on the preceding day by "the young woman." It had worked slowly and almost without consciousness on his part, but it had refused to die out, and it had attained the only fruition possible to it in his last words.

"And you believe that she is really gone? That there is nothing more to fear from her?"

It was the same absorbed, intent tone, and her eyes, fixed eagerly on Falconer now, were hard and glittering. The terrible significance of his words, with all the weight of tragedy they held, seemed to have passed her by, to have no existence for her. It was as though the sense in her which should have responded to it was numbed or non-existent. And Falconer, scandalised and revolted, replied sternly:

"I think you need have no anxiety on that score. She has disappeared of her own free will, and your son, upon reflection, will probably be glad to accept so easy a solution of what he doubtless recognises by this time as a troublesome complication." There was a rigid and utterly antipathetic condemnation of Julian in his voice; he had judged the young man, and sentenced him as vicious to the core, and for all his experience, he held too rigidly to this narrow conception to consider the possible effect upon youth and passion of so sudden and total a thwarting. "My only fear,"

he continued, "is that serious injustice has been done. The young woman is by no means the kind of young woman I was led to believe her. I have grave doubts as to whether it was not our duty to enforce a marriage upon your son, instead of negating the suggestion."

The words were probably rather more than he would have been prepared to stand to had they been put to a practical issue, and he had spoken them, though he hardly knew it, more from a severe desire to arouse what he called in his own mind, "some decent feeling" in the woman to whom he spoke, than from any other reason. From that point of view they failed completely. It was a bright light of triumph that flashed into Mrs. Romayne's eyes as she said quickly, and in an eager, vibrating tone, which seemed less an answer to him personally than to the bare fact to which he had given words:

"Fortunately there is no more fear that."

The tall clock standing in a corner of the room chimed the three-quarters as she spoke, and she started as she heard it.

"It is a quarter to seven," she said. "And I have people to dinner. You have nothing else to tell me, have you? Nothing to advise?"

"Nothing," was the grim answer.

"You do not think—would it be a good thing, do you think, to have the girl traced so that we could always be sure?"

"You need take no further trouble in the matter, in my opinion. If you should observe anything in your son's conduct to revive your uneasiness, the question must, of course, be reconsidered. You will observe him closely, no doubt."

There was a moment's curiously dead silence, and then it was broken by a strange half-laugh.

"No doubt!" said Mrs. Romayne. "No doubt!"

Another pause, and then she turned and glanced at the clock.

"I must go," she said. "Thank you."

She held out her hand, and he just touched it as though conventionality alone compelled him.

"I have considered myself bound in duty in the matter," he said stiffly. "Good night!"

No touch of artificiality returned to her manner even in dismissing him. It remained hard and practical. Her intense absorption in the subject of their interview did not yield by so much as a hair's breadth,

and she remained absolutely impervious to any thought of the man before her. His slight, cold touch of her hand, the sternness of his obvious condemnation of her, were evidently absolutely unobserved by her.

"Good night!" she returned; and as he left her without another word, she crossed the room rapidly and went upstairs to dress for dinner, with no change whatever in the eager, concentrated expression of thought that had settled on her face.

The dinner-party of that evening was unanimously declared by the guests to be quite the most delightful Mrs. Romaine had ever given. The dinner, the flowers, all the arrangements, were perfection, of course; but even when this is the case the "go" of a dinner-party may be a variable or even a non-existent quality; and it was the "go" of this particular occasion that was so remarkable. All component parts of the party seemed to be animated and fused into one harmonious whole by the spirits of the hostess and host. Mrs. Romaine was so charming, so bright, so full of vivacity; Julian, who put in his appearance only just before the announcement of dinner, was so boyish, so lively, so ingenuous. He was a little pale when he first appeared, and the lady he took down to dinner reproached him with working too hard; but as the evening wore on he gained colour. The relations between himself and his mother had always been quite one of the features of Mrs. Romaine's entertainments, but those relations had never been more charmingly accentuated than they were to-night. Julian's manner to his mother was delightful; at once light-hearted and tender—easy and deferential. And her treatment of him was the half-mocking, half-caressing treatment, which paraded the very fact it professed to hide.

Until he came gaily in among her guests that evening, Julian and his mother had not met since that second interview which had prompted her summons to Falconer. Julian had dined out on both the intervening evenings, and it was easily to be arranged under these circumstances, if either of the pair so willed it, that forty-eight hours should go by without their coming in contact with one another. And an onlooker aware of the circumstances of their last meeting, and watching the mother and son through the evening now, might have reflected that the laws of heredity seldom operate exclusively through one parent.

"Good night, dear Mrs. Romaine! Such a delightful evening! How I do envy you that dear boy of yours! It's the greatest pleasure to see you two together."

The speaker was a good-natured old lady, and she had thought it no harm to put into words what her fellow-guests had only thought. She was the last departure, and Mrs. Romaine followed her to the top of the stairs, with a laughing deprecation of the words which was very fascinating, and then turned back into the drawing-room with another "good night," as Julian prepared to attend the old lady to her carriage.

The hall door shut with a bang, and then there was a moment's pause. The mother in the drawing-room above and the son in the hall below stood for an instant motionless. A subtle change had come over Mrs. Romaine's face the instant she found herself alone. It had sharpened slightly, and an eager, haggard anticipation was striving to express itself in her eyes, only to be resolutely veiled, and her expression did not change at all as she stood by the fire waiting. But to Julian's face as he stood with his hand still resting on the hall door there came a great and sudden alteration. All the light and gaiety died out of it before a wild, fierce expression of rebellion and distaste, repressed almost instantly by a pale, sullen look of determination. He moved, and Mrs. Romaine hearing his step moved slightly also; he came up the stairs, and as he came he seemed to force back into his face the easy smile it had worn all the evening.

"It's been a great success, hasn't it, dear?" he said lightly as he crossed the drawing-room threshold.

"A great success!" she said in the same tone—though in her case it rang a little thin.

An instant's silence followed, and then she laid her hand airily on his arm. Her lips were white and dry with agitation, and she knew it; she wondered desperately whether her voice rang as unnaturally in Julian's ears as it did in her own as she said with what she meant for perfect ease:

"Dear boy, let us say our final words upon that wretched business to-night and wake up clear of it to-morrow. May I be happy about you? That's all there is to be said, isn't it?"

She tried to smile, but she knew the effort was a ghastly failure, and again she wondered whether Julian saw. She need

not have feared! Julian was busy with his own histrionic difficulties, and had neither sight nor hearing for her.

"You may be quite happy, little mother!" he said, and the frank tenderness of his tone and manner were only very slightly over-accentuated. "I've made up my mind to do as you wish, and I won't make such a fool of myself again!"

They were standing close together, looking each into the other's face, and he patted her hand as it lay on his arm as he finished. Yet between them, parting them as seas of ice could not have parted them, there lay a shadow beneath which love itself survives only as the cruellest form of torture; the shadow of the unspoken with its chill, unmoveable dead weight against which no man or woman can prevail.

The hand on Julian's arm trembled a little. The terrible presence, which is never recognised except by those to whom its chill is as the chill of death, was making itself vaguely felt about his mother's heart. She let her eyes stray from his face with a painful, tremulous movement, and her fingers tightened round his arm.

"It is all over?" she murmured in a low voice. "It is all over, really?"

As her self-command failed her his seemed to strengthen. He patted her hand again reassuringly and said confidently:

"Yes, dear, indeed! I've only got to beg your pardon, and I do that with all my heart."

He stooped and kissed her tenderly, and as he did so she seemed to rally her forces with a tremendous effort. She returned his kiss with a pretty, effusive embrace, though her lips were as cold as ice.

"I grant it freely," she said. "And if I've felt obliged to be—well, shall we say rather autocratic?—for once in a way, you must forgive me, too, eh?"

But the unspoken, terrible reality as it is, was to be touched by no such ghastly travesty. Julian's laugh was only a firmer echo of his mother's gay artificiality of tone, but as she heard it her lips turned whiter still.

"That's of course," he said. "Of course."

"Then it's all settled!" she responded gaily. "We'll draw a veil over the past from to-night, and behave better in the future. Good night, dear boy!" She kissed him again, patted him lightly on

the shoulder, and moved away. On the threshold she stopped, turned, and blew him a kiss over her shoulder. "Forgiveness and oblivion from to-night," she said; and there was a strange, defiant gaiety in her voice.

With another smile and a nod she went upstairs, and as she went her face grew lined and drawn, like the face of an old woman, and the defiance that lurked in her voice stared out of her eyes, half-wild and reckless.

## NAVAL MISADVENTURES.

OF naval disasters due to the superior prowess of an enemy the record in our naval annals is happily not very extensive, but it is quite otherwise when we come to speak of misadventures in which, if the winds and waves play a part, the element of human maladroitness is not wanting. "There are worse misfortunes at sea" expresses in popular form a recognition of the perils of the deep, but when it comes to misfortunes in harbour, in sheltered roadsteads, and in calm summer seas, we may expect to find that somebody blundered over the business. The earliest annals of our navy, as well as the latest, are not altogether barren of such incidents. Almost as soon as a regular navy was established, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, down went the choicest vessel of the fleet, and this was the "Mary Rose," described as "the noblest ship in Christendom and the flower of all ships that ever sailed." She lay at Spithead awaiting the attack of a powerful French armada, her ports all open and her guns cast loose. It was a lovely day, and the roadstead was smooth and calm, when a puff of wind from the land heeled the vessel over, her guns ran over from the windward side, her heavy top-hamper pulled her down, and over she went, and sank to the bottom, with her captain, Sir George Carew, and a crew of four hundred men. At Spithead, too, in 1703, the "Newcastle," line-of-battle ship, sunk at her moorings with great loss of life, and in 1782 was sunk the "Royal George," almost at the same spot, and under much the same circumstances as the "Mary Rose." The vessel was heeled over in order to clean her copper sheathing:

A land breeze shook the shrouds,  
And she was overset;  
Down went the "Royal George"  
With all her crew complete.

And with her crew were drowned many visitors from shore, who were making merry 'tween decks with Jack Reefer and Tom Bowline, so that the poet's count of "twice four hundred men" was rather under than over the number of the drowned.

Disasters from fire and explosions form a lugubrious category of their own. We may begin with the "Edgar," a fine seventy-four-gun ship just returned from American waters, in 1711, which blew up in Portsmouth Harbour, with great loss of life, few escaping out of a crew of eight hundred men. Cruising off Corsica in 1794, the "Ardent," sixty-four guns, took fire and blew up, with the loss of all her crew of five hundred men. In the same year the "Impétueuse," line-of-battle ship, was burnt and blown up in Portsmouth Harbour, but most of her crew escaped. In the following year the "Boyne," of ninety-eight guns, suddenly took fire at Spithead, while moored in the midst of the Channel Fleet. The crew jumped overboard and were mostly saved by boats from other ships and the shore. The ship's guns were all loaded and shotted, and, as the fire gained a mastery, they went off one after the other, and as the burning ship drifted from her moorings, and with the flood-tide made for the harbour-mouth, she carried before her consternation and dismay. Fortunately the great ship grounded on the sands off Southsea, and soon blew up with a report that shook all Portsmouth to its foundations. The death-roll of twenty souls included two seamen of the "Queen Charlotte," killed by a cannon-shot from the burning vessel.

In the following year, 1796, the "Amphion" frigate was making good defects in Plymouth Sound, lashed to a hulk alongside. All was festivity on board, the captain was entertaining brother-captains from other ships. The ward-room officers also had a dinner going on, and it is thought that there were more than a hundred guests on board, of all ranks in life. An observer describes how the "Amphion" of a sudden appeared to rise in the air till her keel came into view, her masts were shot upwards into the air with a débris of timber, iron, and human remains; next moment there was nothing left of the "Amphion" but dense wreaths of smoke and a tangle of floating wreckage. Yet the first lieutenant was saved with fifteen of the crew, blown into the water uninjured, and of the visitors a little child, hurled from its mother's arms,

who had been shattered to pieces by the explosion.

This was an era of explosions, for not long after, in 1798, the "Resistance," forty-four guns, sailing in Malaysian waters between Sumatra and Borneo, was struck by lightning, when her magazine exploded and she was totally destroyed, while twelve of her crew were saved out of three hundred. The survivors were made prisoners by the Malays, and experienced many sufferings and adventures before they found themselves again under the British flag.

A terrible disaster, too, occurred to the "Sceptre," sixty-four guns, which lay at anchor in Table Bay in 1799. There had been much fêting and feasting between the ship's officers and the residents at Cape Town, and the guests had hardly gone ashore from a supper and ball on board the "Sceptre" when a howling gale came up from the north-west with a heavy sea, so that the "Sceptre" began to drag her anchors and drift towards the shore. Adding to the imminent danger, a fire broke out, and the ship blazed fiercely while she drove helplessly before the wind. The flames were only quenched in the boiling surf in which the gallant ship struck and went to pieces, within sight and hearing of those who had gathered on the shore to render what aid they could. Forty-seven of the crew struggled ashore, or were dragged out of the surf, but the captain and two hundred and ninety seamen and marines, between fire and water, miserably perished.

Cruel, too, was the loss of the "Queen Charlotte," a fine line-of-battle ship of one hundred guns, a sister ship to the "Royal George," which had experienced such a sad fate just eighteen years previously. For it was in 1800 that the "Queen Charlotte" formed part of Admiral Lord Keith's fleet in the Mediterranean, and she was lying off Leghorn when she took fire and burnt with such rapidity that only one hundred and sixty-seven were saved out of her crew of eight hundred and fifty men and officers. The captain, when last seen, was tranquilly making a report of the occurrence to the Admiral in command, of which he gave several copies to seamen, begging them to save themselves if possible, and their despatches.

The next great loss by fire was that of the "Ajax," a fine seventy-four-gun ship, which had shared in Rodney's victories and in the great Battle of Trafalgar. She was



with Duckworth's fleet in the Dardanelles in 1807, when she took fire, and blew up off the island of Tenedos, with a loss of two hundred and fifty men. We shall have to pass on to the year 1864 to chronicle another fire loss, that of the "Bombay" line-of-battle ship, off the port of Monte Video, happily not attended with loss of life. Then we come to the year 1881, when the "Dottrel" blew up in the Straits of Magellan, when only twelve men escaped out of one hundred and fifty.

Another class of misadventure may be termed bull-headed; where a ship not under stress of weather, or disabled by mischance, runs full butt against some well-known rock or island or inhospitable shore. The Scilly Isles, for instance, have long been well known to navigators, and yet, by some gross blunder in navigation, in the year 1707 Sir Cloudesley Shovel's fleet ran against them, and the "Association," the "Eagle," the "Romney," and the "Firebrand" were dashed to pieces, with a terrible destruction of the lives of brave seamen. The "Colossus," line-of-battle ship, ran against the same islands in 1798, and was lost, but nearly all her crew were saved. A more striking instance of bull-headedness was the unhappy loss of the "Ramillies," in 1760. Her sailing-master, thinking that he was entering Plymouth Sound, ran right against the mighty Bolt Head Cliff on the coast of Devon. A narrow rift in the rocks called Ramillies Cove to this day, marks the grave of the ship and of seven hundred men whose bones lie fathoms deep beneath the waves. Again, a fine ship, the "Venerable," Lord Duncan's flagship at the battle of Camperdown, plunged ashore in fine weather against Roundam Head in Tor Bay, and became a total loss, but with a death-roll of only eight men.

A misadventure of the same class was the loss of the "Anson" frigate. She had sailed from Falmouth on Christmas Eve, 1807, to take her station as look-out frigate in the chops of the Channel. The weather became so rough and dirty that her commander bore up for Falmouth, but mistook the Land's End for the Lizard Head, and ran ashore by Loo Pool on the Cornish coast. A tremendous sea was running, and captain and officers were drowned, and about sixty men. But a good many managed to crawl ashore along the mainmast, which had broken off, and formed a perilous bridge over the worst of the surfs;

and some of these were pressed men, who took to their heels as soon as they were ashore, and were heard of no more. But heroic exertions were made from the shore to rescue the survivors. One Roberts, of Helstone, swam through the surf with a rope and was the means of rescuing many; and a brave Methodist preacher struggled through the surf and rescued several women who would otherwise have perished. A similar misadventure befell the frigate "Pomona," in 1811, which on a fine night in October, running up Channel, found the Needles in her way, but though the ship was lost, her crew was happily rescued. A peculiar loss was that of the "Alban" cutter in 1812, which rolled on shore near Aldborough, because it was surmised that her crew were too much intoxicated to keep her off. Anyhow, the commander, his wife, and all but one of a crew of fifty-six men, were drowned within reach of shore.

For a similar example to the last we shall have to go back to the loss of the "Blanche Nef," Anno Domini 1120, when the heir to the English Crown was drowned off the Norman coast, one fine summer's day, the commander and crew having drunk too freely before leaving port, and running the ship upon some well-known rocks.

Another naval disaster which left its mark in history happened Anno Domini 1191, when the English fleet, bound for the Crusades, was driven by a furious tempest on the coast of Cyprus. The ships were plundered by Isaac Comnenius, the ruler of the country, who for this was deposed by our King Richard, who took Cyprus into his own keeping, though he gave it away before long. Richard's subsequent shipwreck in the Adriatic on his return from the Holy Land, an event which led to his captivity and subsequent events, perhaps hardly comes within the compass of naval annals.

But a disaster in which the heir to the Crown was concerned, was the loss of the "Gloucester" in 1682, which struck on the Lemon and Ore Sands, off Yarmouth, with the Duke of York on board, the future James the Second, and a great retinue of nobles, knights, and gentlemen. All discipline was at once lost, and a mad rush was made for the boats. The Duke crawled out of his cabin window into a skiff which his attendants had secured at the sword's point. Two hundred persons perished in the waves, among whom were many of rank and fortune.

A fruitful cause of disaster to the navy of other days was the exposed character of many of its chief havens. A volume almost might be filled with an account of the shipwrecks in Plymouth Sound alone before the completion of its noble break-water. Sunken transports, East Indiamen driven ashore, were incidents of almost every heavy gale from south or south-east. In 1760 the "Conqueror," a seventy-four-gun ship, was driven on Drake's Island and wrecked, her crew saved. And in 1811 the "Amethyst" frigate was wrecked off Mount Batten in Plymouth Sound, now as safe a berth as could be desired, but where the "Pallas" frigate had been wrecked before.

An unlucky name was the "Pallas," for the next frigate that bore it was wrecked on the Scotch coast near Dunbar, with her consort the "Nymph," the greater part of their crews being saved. And on our own home shores we have the wreck of the "Brazen" off Newhaven in 1800, which strewed the Sussex coast with dead bodies—of which many are buried in Newhaven churchyard, where an obelisk marks their grave and records the disaster. Only one man was saved out of a crew of one hundred and five officers and men.

The tension of the incessant blockade which the English fleet maintained against almost every European port during the ascendancy of the great Napoleon, is shown in the long list of disasters that chequers the naval annals of those times. In wild and bitter weather the "Proserpine" frigate was wrecked off the coast of Jutland, and in the midst of drifted ice, over which the crew escaped to the shore. A party, consisting of master, surgeon, boatswain, midshipman, and two seamen, made their way back to the ship to save what they could of her stores and their own belongings. Next morning the ice had disappeared with a shift in the wind, and with it the ship, supposed to have broken up and gone down, and the party of adventurers. The missing men were reported as lost, but found the number of their mess again. They had got on board the frigate, when she was carried off with the ice-floe in the gale. The ship drifted before the wind till she was driven on the opposite coast, when the party, a second time shipwrecked, managed to escape with their lives. Off the same coast was wrecked the "Crescent" frigate in 1808, when the captain and two hundred and twenty of the crew perished, out of two

hundred and eighty. And in February, 1811, the "Pandora" frigate struck on the Scaw reef in the same waters, when twenty-nine of the crew perished from cold and exhaustion. Here, again, the name proved unlucky, as an earlier "Pandora" had been lost in the South Seas in the search for the "Bounty" mutineers.

A still more terrible disaster occurred off the same coast in a north-west gale in November, 1811. The "St. George" battleship, with the "Defence" and another frigate in company, were conveying a fleet of merchant ships to English ports, when the "St. George," crippled by a recent disaster, was driven ashore. The frigate escaped, and the "Defence" might have followed her; but the captain refused to alter his course. "He had received no signal to part company," and he sacrificed his ship, his own life, and the lives of his crew to this Roman spirit of discipline. Only thirteen were saved of thirteen hundred and fifty, officers and men, in the two crews.

If the rocks of the Scandinavian coast were fatal to our British seamen, so also were the sands and shoals of Holland. In 1799 a fine frigate, "La Lutine"—originally French—was lost off the Texel with all hands, and a quantity of treasure, which is still, perhaps, buried in the sands. In the year 1803 five fine frigates were cast away while doing duty in this trying "Channel Patrol." And in 1804 the "Apollo" frigate was lost off the coast of Portugal with forty of the West India fleet.

A terrible wreck was that of the "Athénienne" near Tunis in 1806. She struck on the Shirki rocks, the existence of which had been denied by the captain, who triumphantly exhibited the chart to his officers. "If there are any Shirki rocks we are atop of them;" and so it proved, for next moment the vessel struck, and a terrible "sauve qui peut" ensued. The captain and three hundred and forty-seven others perished, while a hundred and twenty-three were saved in the ship's boats. In contrast to the above was the wreck of the "Dædalus" on a shoal off Ceylon in 1813, where perfect discipline was maintained in the midst of peril, and every soul was saved.

To return to the narrow seas and the Continental blockade in which perished, in 1810, the "Minotaur," battleship. She went to pieces on the Hook's bank, off the

Texel, with the loss of four hundred and eighty of her crew. In the following year the "Hero" frigate, with many merchant ships under convoy from the Baltic, was cast away and lost on the same treacherous coast. The "Manilla" frigate shared the same fate in 1812, but her crew saved themselves on a raft of barrels. In the same year the "Centinel" frigate was lost with sixteen of the Baltic convoy off the Island of Rugen.

In the service of the Channel blockade perished the "Satellite," sloop of war, lost off Cape La Hogue in 1810. The ship vanished one stormy night, and not a soul was left to tell the tale out of a crew of over a hundred men. The "Laurel" frigate, in too eager pursuit of an enemy's ship, ran ashore off Quiberon, and became a total wreck, some of her crew escaping to the shore, where they were made prisoners, while others were rescued by the boats of her consort.

But while the blockade exacted enormous sacrifices in material and the lives of men, it was marvellously effective in its results. Napoleon, then almost supreme in Europe, visiting the Channel ports, saw with leonine rage the extreme limits of his dominion. At Havre he found the harbour deserted, grass growing on the quays, the horizon without a sail—except the odious English fleet which lay there, watching in the roads just out of cannon-shot. Napoleon turned angrily away and hurried from the spot.

Yet during the continuance of the naval war, from 1794 to 1813, we lost, by wreck and misadventure, twenty-five first-class ships and numerous smaller craft, and upwards of six thousand seamen, to say nothing of the losses in transports, hired vessels, and privateers, losses which far exceeded any inflicted by our enemies.

But the period that followed the conclusion of the great war was marked by the repose of a long peace, and little was lost where little was risked. The wreck of the "Alceste" in the Malay Archipelago in 1817 with Lord Amherst, the British envoy, on board, belongs to the pleasant record of adventure familiar to our youth, in which discipline and courage combined bring safety to all concerned. Of the same character was the wreck of the "Megæra" in 1871, when the crew found refuge on the desolate island of St. Paul. Earlier examples in the same instructive series are to be found in the adventures of the crew of the "Wager," wrecked among the

Patagonians in 1741, and of the survivors from the "Litchfield," man-of-war, lost on the coast of Barbary, numbering two hundred and twenty in all out of a crew of three hundred and fifty, with their captivity among the Moors, and various strange adventures. Still more familiar is the recital of the wreck of the "Antelope" on the Pelew Islands in 1783, and the return of Captain Wilson with the son of the island chief, who excited much curiosity in English society as Prince Lee Boo. And there is a spice of romance about the loss of the "Thetis" frigate, in 1830, with nearly a million dollars on board, off Rio de Janeiro.

But among sad misadventures must be told the wreck of the "Arab" sloop off Westport, County Mayo, in 1823, with a crew of a hundred all swallowed up in the raging sea, and of the "Avenger," one of the earliest of our steam frigates, lost off the African coast near Tunis. Then perished Lieutenant Marryat, the son of the great naval novelist, and only Lieutenant Rooke and three others were saved out of a crew of two hundred and fifty men. Again, we have the "Orpheus" frigate wrecked in 1863 off the coast of New Zealand, with a loss of one hundred and eighty-six in officers and seamen.

Coming to our modern fleet of iron-clads, we have to record the awful fate of the "Captain" in 1870. She was of the latest design in turret ships, of four thousand two hundred and seventy-two tons displacement, but with only four feet of freeboard, and thus she literally ploughed her way through the deep. Her designer, Captain Cowper Coles, was on board; her captain, Hugh Burgoyne, a promising son of the old Field-Marshal, was proud of his ship, and had every confidence in her powers. It was a rough and dirty night in the Bay of Biscay, and those on board the flagship lost sight of the "Captain's" lights in the mists and wrack of a rising gale. When morning dawned the ironclad was nowhere to be seen, but fragments of her wreckage soon gave sad evidence of her fate. Yet there were survivors of the catastrophe. In the middle of the night a huge sea had struck the ship and heeled her over; the captain was on deck with the watch, they were all waist-deep in water, and they felt the ship heaving beneath them as she struggled to right herself. But over she went, turning right over; the shrieks of the stokers in their martyrdom of fire and scalding steam



being heard over the roar of the elements. Bottom upwards the ship floated for some minutes, a sufficient time for the poor souls imprisoned within her to realise the horror of their fate. Those on deck had a chance for life, and soon the captain, the gunner, and an able seaman found themselves clinging to the keel of the pinnacle. Then out of the gloom appeared the ship's launch, which a number of seamen had scrambled into. "Come, sir, let us jump," said the seaman on the pinnacle to his captain, taking him by the hand. "Save yourself, my man," said Burgoyne; and the man jumped and was hauled on board, but nothing more was seen of the captain. The survivors, eighteen in all out of five hundred, made for the shore, and landed safely, and came home to tell the tale.

Another sad story is that of the "Serpent," lost in 1890 on the coast of Spain, only three being saved out of a crew of one hundred and seventy-five. And in 1887 the "Wasp" gunboat disappeared in the China seas, lost, it is supposed, in a typhoon. In a like mystery is involved the fate of the "Atalanta" training ship, which sailed from Bermuda on the thirty-first January, 1880, with two hundred and eighty souls on board, and was never afterwards heard of. Another fatal disaster to a training ship, the "Eurydice," occurred off the Isle of Wight some years before.

Our more recent brood of sea monsters has not escaped its misadventures. The fate of the "Vanguard" will be remembered, run into and sunk by the "Iron Duke" in a fog off Wicklow Head in the year 1885. Happily the ship was kept afloat for an hour by her water-tight compartments, and all her crew were rescued. In 1886, when in Lisbon Harbour, the "Sultan," in changing her position, sent to the bottom a merchant steamer, thirty of the crew of which were drowned. The "Minotaur" also dragged and fouled the "Monarch," and among the crush of iron pots the fragile shells of ordinary shipping seemed likely to suffer. The "Sultan" herself was wrecked and abandoned in 1889, but was raised and floated in the following year, and she still occupies her place in the Navy List. It was touch-and-go with the "Swiftsure" in 1885 on a sandbank in the South Atlantic, but she came off, and is now guardship at Devonport. The "Victoria" run aground in Greek waters in 1892, but was got off

without irreparable damage. In the same year the "Naiad" and "Apollo," fine cruisers of the modern type, ran against the Skelligs in the course of the naval manoeuvres, but were skilfully floated off again. Then we have the recent grounding of the "Howe," a fine first-class battleship, in the entrance to the port of Ferrol, with a satisfactory sequel in the news of her being floated into port, though not exactly with a whole skin. As we must have these iron monsters and must send them cruising about in narrow waters, like whales in a tub, and in all kinds of weather, and must have them manoeuvring in line and in column, and playing at the risky game of follow-my-leader, after the ancient fashion of line-of-battle ships, we cannot expect to be altogether free from such occasional misadventures.

#### FROM FAIRYLAND ONWARDS.

To what extent our early reading influences us later on is a question which has sometimes occurred to me with interest. We must all, I suppose, have skimmed through some thousands of pages which have left little or no impression behind them; but on the other hand, how often does the merest suggestion carry us back to some familiar story of our childhood, out of the associations of which the old likes and dislikes which were wont to be so arbitrary and so unreasoning, spring up unbidden to influence our present judgement!

Yet for nothing in the world would we part with these youthful traditions, around which the intervening years have but shed an additional glamour. The foundation-stones are they of our fancy's castle; the firm rocks on which we found a footing when first we sought an outlook over the sea of literature.

Not that our attitude towards them remains unaltered. Few of us, I imagine, would care to read over from beginning to end even the most cherished of our fairytales, unless indeed they came to us in such tempting guise as does the *Sleeping Beauty* of Tennyson. It is the memory of them we love. In spite of pantomimes and burlesques—all we have seen of them for years—they retain their corner in our hearts, and the original charm, to which, as we have said, distance has lent her enchantment, still hovers about their names. Let a Millais but choose Cin-



derella for the subject of his Academy picture, and we crowd around it in eager expectation. "Where is the mouse-trap?" we say. "Ah! there lies the pumpkin." We like upon occasion to refer to

Little Snowdrop, who lives in the glen  
Over the hills with the seven wee men,  
to Red Riding Hood pulling the bobbin that  
the latch might lift, or to those pretty Babes  
who no burial from any man receive.

I myself, personally, must confess to a weakness besides for divers other less known inhabitants of fairy-taleland. Little Hilda, for instance, who went out in the snow to look for the strawberries, for the want of which her sick friend had declared she must die. Into the forest, through the deep drifts she plunges, and lo! all of a sudden the air is mild, the trees are budding, and the birds begin to sing. Here is the little forester, clad in green, awaiting her by the lake in his boat drawn by swans. Swiftly he will pilot her into the presence of the king of all the swans, who will give her fresh luscious strawberries for the sick one, and glittering ruby ones for herself.

Why is the sea salt? Let me tell you; I know the answer so well. Is it not because the last owner of the fairy mill gave the command,

"Mill, mill, grind away,  
Some fresh salt now, I pray!"

and forgot to leave orders as to when it should stop?

My only acquaintance with Tales from the Norse was derived from a copy, by reason of much handling and conning, tattered and dog-eared to the last degree, which after my time went to pieces altogether. But what joy it was to read in it of Shortshanks, whose little boat—which he carried in his pocket—grew and grew as he put his finger, hand, or arm into it, till at last it was big enough to hold himself! To this day, when I am starting on an expedition I sometimes find myself apostrophising the agent of locomotion—be it horse or steam-engine—in Shortshanks's magic words: "Off and away over high hill and low dale, and don't stop till you come to the King's castle!" It savours of Hans Christian's "Fliegende Koffer," you may say. True, but then I knew Shortshanks first.

Another of the Norse Tales, Dapplegrim, is to be found, I fancy, under a different title in Brothers Grimm. Dapplegrim was a young horse which went careering wild and free over the country along with a

score of like companions. He it was alone, with his strong limbs and surefootedness, who was to succeed in climbing the glass hill and freeing the princess who sat at the top.

Once, in later years, I caught a glimpse of a Dapplegrim, but her men called her Sylvia. It was in a far country where horses were plentiful, but no matter how much satisfaction one's mount might be giving one there would always be a chorus: "Not like Sylvia! Nothing to Sylvia!" Ah, it was Sylvia that was fleet of foot, strong in the wind, firm-knit, beautiful!

"Who is Sylvia? What is she  
That all our swains commend her?"

sang I; but Sylvia, they told me, was out with the mob, and I might or might not have a chance of seeing her.

One day I was riding with a friend along a road which traversed a flat, open plain. In the far distance we could distinguish a dark, moving mass, ever, as it seemed, increasing in magnitude; while at the same time a dull, rumbling sound made itself also increasingly heard. It was the mob.\* On, on they came. Tramp, tramp, tramp! Clatter, clatter, clatter! Down into the bed of a creek, splash through it; bob, bobbing appeared their heads and shoulders on the near side.

"They are making fair for us; they mean to run us down!" I shouted in dismay; but my companion merely smiled.

"Keep a tight hold on your reins," he said; "the temptation to join the mob is too much for some horses." So a tight hold you may be sure I kept.

In the meantime, all together, straight as an arrow they made towards us. Nearer and ever nearer till within some twenty yards of where we had pulled up, then, as if moved by a single impulse, off they turned sharp to the left and dashed at full gallop across country.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" shouted my companion after them; and, catching the enthusiasm:

"Hurrah! hurrah!" shouted I.

"You noticed her, of course?" he asked me after a minute or so.

"Her—who?"

"The mare, to be sure—leading, by a

\* During winter in the Colonies, all the horses about a station not required at that season for work are cast loose to forage on their own account; and being gregarious by nature, they attach themselves to others from neighbouring stations, forming together a goodly band, which is known as the "mob."

full length too, by Jingo! That was Sylvia!"

Head in the air, nostrils dilated, mane flying to the wind, her beautiful shaggy coat glancing in the wintry sunshine—yes, I had noticed her. But at the same time my thoughts went back, back through the long years, across mighty oceans and wide-spread continents, back to the old attic nursery, the blazing fire, with its tall wired guard, and the broad window-seat on which lay the tattered, wide-margined, large-printed, loosely held together leaves of the old Norse Tales, and I knew that at last I had seen Dapplegrim!

There are some praiseworthy persons who have kept, or have had kept for them, diaries, records of all their doings from an abnormally early age, and can therefore tell us precisely at what period of their life this, that, or the other phase of thought was upon them. I, unfortunately, am not one of these. I have no means of ascertaining, and hence comparing notes about it with others, the exact chronological order in which Charles Lever, Walter Scott, Marryat, Dickens, captivated my fancy. I know that at one time the acme of happiness in my estimation was reached when I had begged successfully for a half-holiday, and had purchased a three-half-penny dreadful, the illustration on the front cover of which was invariably a group of feathered Red Indians—presumably on the war-path. Once, the fun of the "Widow Malone Ohone" was inimitable, and Ballantyne's "Coral Island" the finest thing in print. Not so long ago I seized eagerly upon a copy of the last-named, thankful to have got something into my hands which I knew to be worth reading. Alas, alas! what a fall was there! In the lapse of time the fine gold had changed to clay. Nevertheless, if generation after generation of children continue to derive from it the intense enjoyment that the "Coral Island" afforded to me, then indeed was the book not written in vain.

How well do I remember my first assault on Walter Scott! An enthusiastic brother set me down to "Ivanhoe" in one corner of the library, while he himself skimmed eagerly the pages of the "Talisman" in another. But the print was small and the matter heavy; the birds were calling without, and the scented summer breezes played temptingly about the open window, and I could, could not get over my third page. Oh, how I tried! With what determination did I attack those puzzling

sentences, for I would on no account go on without carrying the sense along with me, and the idea of skipping, I believe, never once entered my head! It was such a fine, grown-up thing to be doing, and I was such a little, little girl! But as it proved I was too little, for, after all, it went over me to compass that page.

The time could then not have been far distant, however, when Gurth and Wamba, Rebecca and Rowena, Cedric the Saxon and Sir Sluggish Knight, were to become household words for me; even now, I suppose from the fact that they were amongst my earliest favourites, there seems to be poetry in the very sound of their names.

I must confess that in my line were no Daisy Chains, Queechys, Schönberg Cotta Families. At the time when these were due I was no doubt immersed in the prankish doings of Midshipman Easy, in the triumphs of that cool customer the Green Hand, or the delightful horrors of the Cases of Circumstantial Evidence as given in "Chambers's Miscellany," where you are treated to the details of bonâ-fide trial after trial, in which the innocent were condemned and put to death, the truth only transpiring too late.

But, well-a-day, how old names and old favourites crowd in when one begins to cast about for them! What of Eva and Saint Clair, Topsy and Tom, Eliza on the ice with Jim Crow in her arms? Of the Ugly Duckling and the Master Thief? Of "Robinson Crusoe" and the infinitely weaker "Swiss Family Robinson," which does not stand reading nowadays as does its great model? Here we have Alice in Wonderland, all Dickens—from David Copperfield to the Marchioness, from Fagin to Little Nell—and the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments." Then "Undine," "Peter Schlemihl," and "The House of the Seven Gables."

Who is it that hovers about us when we have locked ourselves out from our goods and chattels, and are searching fruitlessly for the key? When we are gazing upon the leaps and tumbles of a woodland stream, or the angry wavelets on the surface of a wind-swept lake? Is it not Undine? And Undine again when we come across—as we do sometimes—a maiden bright as she is beautiful; but alas! all light and no heat, one in whom the human soul is still an unknown quantify.

Undine, liebes Bildchen du!  
Seit ich zuerst aus alten Kunden  
Dein seltsam Leuchten aufgefunden  
Wie sangst du oft mein Herz in Ruh!

Peter Schlemihl rises before us whenever a particularly sunny day draws attention to our more than usually conspicuous shadow; ay, and in his metaphorical aspect he crops up besides at sundry other times and seasons. While as for "The House of the Seven Gables," is it not a poem rich in delicate touches, in exquisite detail, and at the same time in broad, tragic shadows and fateful meanings?

I shall end off here with another favourite—my last I suppose it must have been, before a distinct full stop was placed on one period of my life by my departure for school to that region which we are sometimes wont vaguely to designate as "abroad." "The Count of Monte Cristo," I know now, is all wrong in its morals. Let him be never so much the agent of divine justice, the Count, in his poison lessons to Madame de Villefort, for example, goes a trifle beyond what we can comfortably allow a hero whom we intend to go on respecting to the end of the last volume to indulge in. Nevertheless, the book abounds in tit-bits. The Château d'If, the Abbé Faria, entering the grotto, Noirtier, the meeting with Countess Mercédès, Caderousse's death, etc.—I could fill a whole page in merely instancing the thrilling episodes of Dumas' masterpiece.

I shall never forget the unexpected distinction which my acquaintance with this book brought me amongst my Continental schoolmates. Quite innocently, in conversation with one of them, I had happened to mention it, but the effect was electrical. What! was it possible? "The Count of Monte Cristo"! I had read, actually read that? In the course of a few hours every girl in the school knew of it; my class-fellows crowded around me to make quite sure by personal enquiry that there was no mistake, while the older girls—who before had scarcely deigned to notice me, and the most senior of whom was only as a special favour allowed upon occasion to dip into translations of Walter Scott—even went so far as to invite me to walk with them in the garden. Thus much, at any rate, did my early reading stand me in good stead on this my first sally into the great world.

#### DONEGAL SKETCHES.

##### IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

COUNTY Donegal is, to the average Englishman, quite as much "terra incognita" as India or South Africa. I will

not say it is as rough and interesting as those other parts of our little globe. In some respects, however, it is probably rougher and more interesting than either of them. Those who know what they are talking about tell us that the cliffs to the south of the county are not to be beaten for grandeur anywhere in Great Britain; and on the other hand, for downright wretchedness, you must search the world to find families to compare with the Irish under Bloody Foreland and between Gweedore and the Atlantic.

I dare say, on the strength of Western Ireland's reputation for "soft" weather, it was rather a mad thing to do; but the other day, finding myself in Donegal town, I studied the map for a while and there and then determined to tramp the coastline of the county as long as my easiest pair of boots would hold out. The hotel to which I had been seduced was a mean affair. It seemed likely that accommodation would degenerate rather than improve as I got into the wilds. But I was a thought reckless. It should hinge on the weather the next morning. If the day opened reasonably fine I would accept the omen. If it rained my plan should go to the wall.

Having made this arrangement, I went out to find the points of Donegal town. There was no one in the hotel to instruct me. A single little damsel, about fourteen years old, seemed to run the house. True, outside, in the diamond—as they call their market-places in the shire—there was a large-limbed man in loud check leaning against some cars, with his eye constantly upon the hotel. I was given to understand that he was the landlord, though I interchanged not a word with him. Even when, later, I rang the bell in a pet because the leg of the arm-chair would insist on going through the floor of the room, it was the little girl who appeared. I could have been angry with the proprietor, but with this humble little piece of consistent industry by no means.

Donegal is not much of a place, barring its diamond, which is immense, and its bay, in which the yachting ought to be admirable. You look from the slip of a quay across a mile or more of still water, with green hills bounding it, and pretty green islets studding it. There is an old abbey on a bluff commanding the pool, with graves innumerable, and grass—just ere haymaking—about six feet high. If the Donegal commonalty would but respect

this burial ground it would be a delightful place. As it is, one has to move among the tombs with a distressing amount of precaution. There is also an ancient ruin in the lower part of the town. It is called Donegal Castle for the sake of euphony. Really, it is an Elizabethan manor house in decay, and a remarkably picturesque one. The score or two of conventional hovels at its base on the other side of the river are singularly mean by the side of it.

Well, as luck desired it, the morrow was bright enough, with a strong wind from the east. I settled my bill, therefore, which was moderate, arranged for the transport of my luggage, including my fishing-rod, and began a walk, which, ere the fortnight was out, had grown to the respectable total of two hundred miles.

My programme bade me reach Killibegs that afternoon. The distance is about eighteen miles. It is as undulating as all Donegal high-roads, so that one may respectfully apply to it and the county the words from a Lake District "Visitors' Book":

He surely is an arrant ass  
Who pays to ride up Kirkstone Pass;  
He'll find in spite of all their talking,  
He'll have to walk, and pay for walking.

The people were haymaking in the town's vicinity, and very sweet was the country air. Hereabouts you have no suspicion of true mountain scenery. The road is bordered with hawthorn hedges, and not a few attractive villa residences are to be seen. But at Mount Charles, some four miles west, the change begins. This little town is wonderfully situated, looking down upon a network of waterways between the headlands of this part of Donegal. The views always beneath them ought to elevate the minds of the townspeople. But it does not appear to have much effect upon them. The first person I met in the place was a mendicant, who seemed delighted to inform me that "there's niver a divil of a fellow in Ireland more wretched than me, yer honour." This with a contented grin.

It blew great guns from here onward, and the southern sea was dark under the clouds. I passed a little lake with a heath-clad knoll to it which looked tempting. But the waves on it would have rocked a Thames house-boat, and so I did not regret my fishing-rod. Here at length I came out of hedgerows. Peat-bogs and morasses showed themselves, with the grey shapes

of the mountains inland. Irish cottages of the locally approved type became plentiful—with pigs, ducks, and geese, poultry, tethered calves, and human bipeds all in sweet communion therein. The coarse red legs of the women and girls were quite shocking to see. There were also many dismantled houses, with nettles and foxgloves thick on the parlour floor, telling of the decrease of Donegal's population from two hundred and ninety-six thousand four hundred and forty-eight in 1841 to one hundred and eighty-five thousand two hundred and eleven in 1891. The domestic cat is much to the front in Donegal homesteads; and a miserable-looking beast it is.

I did not rest until Dunkineely, eleven miles from Donegal, was reached. The village is but one longish street, which was this day rather populous with operatives from the railway line which was being constructed with British relief money from Donegal to Killibegs. Here some Guinness and bread-and-cheese was to be had, and nothing else. The tavern-keeper was civil enough to invite me into his drawing-room while I regaled myself. My surroundings ought to have humiliated me. It was the strongest anti-English atmosphere I had breathed in Ireland. There were engravings of the "Leaders of the Irish Nation," ancient and modern, upon the walls. Among the latter Archbishop Walsh was noticeable in the middle of the group and Parnell stood defiantly to the left. For a few minutes also I dipped into a National History of Ireland, "for the use of schools," and had my blood chilled as I read of the odious iniquities of the English against the poor down-trodden land in which I was. The language of the book was almost treasonably strong. I imagine that the relief railway in the neighbourhood—Government grant about one hundred and twenty thousand pounds—is the best gift Dunkineely has had since it became a parish. But the compilers of these books "for the use of schools" are unmindful of England's benefactions. Her tyrannies overshadow them all.

Two o'clock found me at Killibegs, the last hour having been spent along its pleasant bay. Here at any rate I was getting into the heart of the country. It is a really pretty place, with broken land behind it, and hills fifteen or sixteen hundred feet high yet further behind. For yachting shelter it is of course notorious; and the authorities still hope that the



Government—especially the new Government—will be of their opinion, that there can be no better harbour of refuge in the north-west—when a little money has been spent upon it. Meantime, it means to bid for tourists and anglers with right good will. Though only some seven or eight hundred inhabitants strong, it has three hotels, two very decent, in which for half-a-crown a traveller may dine to his contentment. Just at present it was very busy with salmon. Every other day or so the local agent sent a few hundredweight of the fish across to Sligo in a smack. The source of supply is twofold. First, from Mr. Musgrave's fishery at Teelin Bay, some ten miles distant; and secondly, from the poachers. The mail car itself is not above carrying a fish or two which are not of respectable lineage. All this drain on the water at the mouth of the famous Glen river of Carrick is vastly prejudicial to the interests of men who visit Carrick to fish. It explains the tale that was told me of an enthusiastic sportsman who whipped the river for two months not long since, and caught but one salmon in the time. On the other hand, after rains, you may still do well in the Glen. Three salmon in an evening was the record one day last July of a gentleman connected with one of the Government relief works in the district.

I stayed two days at Killibegs, satisfied with the soothing, pretty place. There was some election fuss going on, and voters came in from the country in their best black and with their hats cocked over their eyes in rather a mischievous manner. But they had umbrellas instead of bludgeons, and were content with badgering distasteful speakers instead of breaking their heads. It was all settled for them. They were to vote "athraight for the country," and in due course they did it. The weather kept very kind. As the Killibegs river, the Bangosteen, was too low to promise sport, I took out the hotel boat and we sailed away to the lighthouse at the mouth of the bay. It was all very well going, but no joke tacking home under a scorching noontide sun. We saw old women picking seaweed, and were offered it at a halfpenny a handful. It seemed to me that if Nature meant us to eat such stuff, she would have made it a thought more palatable. Between edible seaweed and shoe-leather the difference is but due to the respective thickness of the materials. The poor women were grateful for a

pollock or two which we had caught with a strip of note-paper on a hook.

On the third day, which was cloudless, I sent on my traps to Carrick, and took to the road again. There is some lovely country just west of Killibegs by the sandy bay of Fintragh, pretty hillocks in Irish confusion, with rocks and flowers littering them. To-day the haymakers had all these knolls in hand, and truly they could not have had better weather for their work. The mountains of Crownardd and Croaghacullin behind were a hot purple. The blue peat-smoke rose straight from the pale yellow hovels up the hill-sides, set, it seemed, as much out of the way of the civilised road as they could get. A politician on a horse passed me, also bound for Carrick. In the evening he rode back again, having had quite enough of the Carrick boys, who deprived him of much self-respect.

At Kilcar, which is deep in the mountains, I might have had a fling on the river, though it was very low. "It's a free stream, entirely," I was informed by a ragged fellow with a rolling eye who was mending his breeches by the roadside, "ready for the illiction, sorr." His wife and he were not, he observed, "on speaking terms" that day. A frugal luncheon of bread and butter and milk in this dirty village was at any rate enough to aid me on towards Carrick. A constable fishing for sand eels, to catch pollock with, volunteered an opinion of the people very adverse to Kilcar; and I was not surprised later to come upon the car of the Land Commissioners, which had been coaxed up the new Carrick road—a bed of stones—towards a pack of misery-smitten cottages. This Teelin Bay district is one of the most congested in the county, and the revision of rents here has been disastrous to the landlords. But it is also a wonderfully picturesque part of the world. For here begins the Donegal cliff scenery, at which a man may exclaim "Oh!" and "Ah!" to his heart's content.

I quite expected to have to take pot-luck at the famous Carrick Hotel. Visions of four sleepers in a room came to me as I walked up the Teelin Glen, with the magnificent hindsides of Slieve League on the left, an experience far from uncommon in the hotels of the Scotch Highlands during the holidays. But here, in the Donegal Highlands, it was no such thing. I was offered an extensive choice of sweetly clean bedrooms, and was told that,

save the two gentlemen on the Land Commission, I was the sole visitor. The elections were made responsible for this slight to Carrick. It was election business also which, on this particular afternoon, gave the Carrick fair a touch of interest out of the common. A Parnellite orator was on a cart in the middle of the little village, and among pigs, sheep, old clothes sellers, and some really pretty girls, "in town" for the day, was execrating England and the English in the usual style. But the Donegal farmers and peasantry—with the Land Commission lowering rents every day in their midst—were not very inimical to England. They hustled the orator, who was an exceedingly foolish sort of politician, and finally cheived him back to Killibegs, the police looking on with their hands in their sides, much diverted.

At the Carrick Hotel you pay ten shillings a day or three guineas a week for accommodation—and get it. This includes fishing rights on the Glen river and the lakes on the Musgrave property. Mr. Musgrave, whose shooting-box is just above the hotel, in a bleak but bracing situation, is a landlord in good odour with his tenants nowadays. Anciently it was different, but now no one has anything to say in his disfavour. As I have hinted, the salmon in the Glen river are nothing to what they were ere Teelin Bay was worked so vigorously. The landlord's income from the sea-fishery may be reckoned roughly at about two thousand pounds, which is better than a multitude of Irish tenants with "revised rents."

The evening of my arrival, after dinner, I took my rod among the rocks of the Glen. Some of the pools of the river were sweet to look upon, and the trout could be seen leaping at the flies in a lazy fashion. In these pools, even in the more degenerate days of the river's fame, you may get a salmon if you have luck and patience, though the weather has been fine for a week or two. For my part, I am fain to confess that I did not do very well. I tried three of Rogan's most attractive flies, and offered them in my best style—not saying much—to small purpose. It was no great fun pulling out little fish which ought to have been put to bed by their nurses at that late hour. The midges, too, grew distracting. People who do not know Ireland imagine that it is not visited by these representatives of the eleventh plague of Egypt. They should try Donegal

in fine summer weather. I was told by an angler here how they lost him a really nice salmon. He had played the fish, and was about to land it, when the midges came about his then unprotected face in such hordes that he dropped rod and gaff and applied both hands to himself instead of the fish. Master salmon used his opportunity, and was heard no more of.

And so home in the gloaming, with honeysuckle and meadow-sweet odorous from the thick undergrowth on the western side of the stream. The lane near was populous with lasses returning from Carrick's mild fair festivities. They talked with rare Irish zest as they strode along barefooted, dropping me civil greetings by the way.

The following morning opened with most engaging tokens. From my bedroom I looked at the swelling buttresses of Slieve League, and had no manner of doubt that it was a tempting of Providence not to climb those wonderful cliffs with such portents. There was little or no wind at the time—another great point for the man who means not to be deterred from tackling the One Man Pass; a picture of which some readers may remember in Mrs. Craik's account of her gentle roamings along the highways of Donegal a few years ago. If Mrs. Craik had been able to take the coast-line as I took it, I think her pen would have sent up the price of land throughout this picturesque, poor country.

Breakfast over I set forth. It was ideal haymaking weather. By no means good for fish though, except as they catch fish at Teelin. The boats could be seen out in the Bay, and I was told they were having rare sport of its kind. It was also whispered by a dilapidated, lean man with a squint, that the price for the "sly fish"—meaning the poached ones—had fallen to threepence a pound. At this rate the merchant of Killibegs would, no doubt, do well in the Manchester market, and, perhaps, even discourage Mr. Musgrave's hired men from exerting themselves overmuch.

Donegal is not a great land for beggars. After Kerry, indeed, it seems almost free from them. Here in the Teelin Bay district, however, sundry small beings braced themselves to me for social purposes, and gradually let their chatter drift in the direction of their pockets. "Oh, yis, they're fine tarties," said one little rogue when I complimented him on the produce of his paternal acres, "but we has to

pay mighty dear for them, indeed we has!" At a guess, I should say his father paid rent of one pound a year for his five acres of land, and this is what he called dear! The tales told by the Land Commissioners here redound not inconsiderably to the Donegal Paddy's craft and wit, but do not denote any landlordian tyranny of the foolish kind. With a little more manual work the good fellow would be happy enough; and this, too, the benevolent British Government is providing for him. His rents are reduced by the Land Commissioners; and the congested district's gentlemen are helping him with fisheries and other labours, more or less good for the country, and certainly putting money into Paddy's pocket, if he likes to work for it. If only as much care were devoted to the English poor in England, what a happy, contented nation we should be! As for the Donegal Paddy, indeed, Paddy all over the land, he takes what he can get from us, and does not even pretend to be grateful.

From Teelin village—a straggling congeries of hovels by the Bay side, and up the hollows of the hills—I climbed towards Carrigan Head, the first of the series of coast precipices. It was a pleasure at last to get out of the range of the turf-cutters, who spoil the look of so many of the Donegal hillsides. The last of the huts was passed, with an ill-conditioned cur at my calves, for strangers are scarce in these parts. Then hey for the heather, the close-nibbled downs, the heights, and the unpolluted sea-breezes! Carrigan head is about seven hundred and fifty feet, as nearly perpendicular as the wear and tear of storms and waves upon a headland will let it be. I was in luck, indeed. The sea was glassy, with just a land breeze ruffling it. Beyond were Sligo, and even Mayo; below the sea-birds shrieked and sang as I looked down the gnarled and broken red precipices of this imposing promontory. The remains of a signal tower stand on a green protuberance of the cape—a relic of 1798, when we had to be much on guard against the French, with whom the local patriots were more than becomingly familiar.

But if Carrigan Head was so strong a sight, what shall I say of the Slieve League Cliffs, which were well in view after a few minutes' clamber along the edge of the precipices? Carrigan Head is seven hundred and fifty feet above the sea level;

Slieve League one thousand nine hundred and seventy-three feet. I declare I shall shirk the task of attempting to describe the latter. If my pen were to try a flight lofty enough to do justice to Slieve League, its career would summarily end. Vaulting ambition would be the death of it. But seriously, I have seen no finer sight anywhere in Europe, Africa, or America—such parts of each, at least, as my experience enables me to discuss. No doubt I was a bit favoured by the day, though there are those who say that the mountain and its seaward face are indescribably thrilling under thick cloud. That sounds rather Hibernian, but one understands their meaning. For my part, I know only that I laid myself down on the heathery cliff-edge of Bungalow and stared at Slieve League's red and white tremendous precipices, till the nape of my neck smarted from the exposure to the sun. It is superb, nothing less. In future, when I yearn for the sublime, I shall hesitate a good deal between taking a ticket for Switzerland and just crossing from Holyhead to Dublin, and seeking the mail train to the north, which shall bring me into Donegal in much less than twenty-four hours.

The One Man Pass is the thing to see and try your nerve on at Slieve League. Wonders of this kind do not usually satisfy expectation. But Slieve League's curiosity is not to be sneezed at. The common local description of it is "a ledge of rock with a fifteen-hundred-feet precipice on the Atlantic side, and a very steep, clean slope to the east." This, as such descriptions go, is not much amiss. But the precipice is not perpendicular. A man might recover himself if he dropped on to it. As for the land side, I would take my chance there with a fair amount of confidence. Still, when all's said in detraction of the Pass, it is a ticklish sort of roof-line to creep along. Its width is about two feet, and it is composed of polished rock, slippery enough at times. Its length may be thirty to forty feet, and its angle of steepness about thirty to thirty-five degrees. In anything of a wind the Pass would be decidedly risky. As, however, there was but little wind to-day, I took my dose of peril without flinching, and after a very enjoyable little thrill got to the upper end. You may do it crawling or standing. As it was so fair a day I did it standing, without much additional risk.

Thence to the top of the mountain it is a tiring pull up a succession of edges, some

quite steep, and some rough. And at the top I just laid myself down on the lee-side of a bluff and drank to the peak in whisky, and afterwards broke my fast with sandwiches, and smoked a cigar, while I stared at the sea and the cliffs and the lighthouse of Rathlin O'Birne, a little to the north-west, and execrated the midges, who seemed to hold tobacco-smoke in complete contempt.

Slieve League is a mountain to "do." There can be no two opinions about it.

As the afternoon was waning I made briskly for the Malin Beg Cliffs, plunging down the heather slopes in great strides. After a wearisome five hours' move I found myself again at Carrick, an hour late for dinner. I had quite miscalculated the time it would take me to get over the rough mountain-land between League and Malin and Malin and the Carrick road. Certain grouse whom I disturbed hereabouts seemed much surprised at the sight of humanity; and well they may have been. Of Malin Beg I should like to say this: that, when Donegal is turned to account, it will attract a good many people for its pretty bay of sand. Here it was, on the cliffs adjacent, that Prince Charlie used to walk, looking for the ships that were to come and help him to the throne. He probably used much emphatic language on these breezy heights. My walk this day was rather over than under twenty rough miles.

## "OUTLAWED."

A SHORT SERIAL.

### CHAPTER IX.

DORNTON, admiring the view of the grounds from the terrace before the house, saw them return a little later together.

He noticed that Hope wore no hat and carried no parasol, though the afternoon sun was flaming down on lawns and paths.

He saw, too, that though on catching sight of him she made an effort to brace herself up, there was something fatigued in her air and step. The detective sauntered away as they drew near. For the first time his face showed some feeling.

"I didn't think it, but Gilbert Egerton is as big a cad as his brother, and Brown should know."

In spite of the difference of years and occupations, a very genuine liking and

respect reigned between the wealthy ex-tradesman and the detective.

Their acquaintance dated from some years back. It had begun professionally, Mr. Brown having had need of the services of Scotland Yard, and though they rarely met, the acquaintanceship had continued. But it was entirely one between themselves, for Mr. Brown had long ago begun to select a different set of friends and acquaintance for his daughter.

For this reason, lonely though he had been, he had kept her the greater part of the time at school, taking her abroad in the holidays, and half intentionally, half unconsciously, separated her from those with whom in her father's former position she would naturally have associated. Nor was it from mere vulgar ambition. His wife had been of a better social station than his own, and he had wished to lift her daughter back to it, while his own love for and pride in this beloved daughter tempted him to choose for her all that the world held best.

Dornton had never met her, nor had she the least idea that he was acquainted with her father. The young detective himself, there simply to carry out his professional duties, would never have thought of mentioning the fact. Nor would he, under any circumstances, have claimed an acquaintance with her. He measured perfectly the social gulf that now separated them, though had she remained in her father's former position, he might have been received on an equality by them.

But though he gave no sign, he found that his attitude towards Hope had its difficulties.

For there was a queer frowning look on his face as he recalled the girl's tired, sweet eyes.

Certain it was, that from that moment he had not the slightest desire to spare the pride and feelings of the aristocratic family, on which so great a disgrace had fallen. The only member of it for whom he still had the smallest sympathy was Mr. Egerton himself.

He made his way now to the library, where the latter was sitting. He went to announce his departure and the withdrawal of his men. Mr. Egerton's endurance, tried so severely, broke down at last. Humbled to the dust by the insult of the police in his house, he broke out into a paroxysm of rage. He stormed at Dornton, threatening to report him to the authorities, and never to rest till he was dismissed the force for



his infamous blunder. Dornton listened in silence.

"And I mean it, too!" exclaimed Mr. Egerton, a little later, as he described the interview to Gilbert. "I will write to Scotland Yard to-night, and what is more, if the scoundrel hadn't gone when he did, I would have horsewhipped him out of the grounds. I wouldn't have stood another hour of it! Thank Heaven, we have seen the last of him and his set."

But Gilbert Egerton scarcely looked relieved. How much information had that silent, keen-eyed man picked up during the day? And did this quiet departure mean defeat or victory?

He and his father were sitting over the fruit and wine after dinner. They had dined alone. Hope, pleading a headache, had stayed in her room, and Mrs. Egerton had still felt too unwell to come downstairs. The dinner had been rather silent. It was not till the servants left the room that Mr. Egerton had roused himself from a kind of listless heaviness, which had followed on that outbreak of anger in the library, to tell his son what had happened.

"How dared they come here?" he said, his face flushing purple again. "Haven't I done enough yet to show them that I have nothing to do with that——"

"I am afraid not, sir," said Gilbert very bitterly. "You see, he is always Wilfred Egerton."

He had never said a word to soften his father's anger against the first-born son. There had never been any love between the two brothers. They had quarrelled and fought as boys, and had grown up to hate and despise each other as men. The continued sense as of a great and grievous wrong had rankled in Gilbert's heart as a boy, and it lived on still, though in a different form, to-day.

As a child he had been passionately attached to his mother, and he had felt the difference in the love she gave him and that she lavished on his brother. As they grew older, and he and his brother drifted farther apart, his mother's heart went after the other son, and in her pity and grief for the erring, she became almost unjust to the one who had made no such claims on her devotion.

To Gilbert, as well as to his father, Wilfred's life had been a perpetual humiliation. He made no allowances for him. His mother knew this, and reproached him in her heart for being harsh and hard.

He had grown to-day accustomed to take the second place in her love. But he knew that he held the first in his father's esteem and affection; that it was a bitter regret to him that he had no power to leave the property to the son who would honour the old name, while that other who must inherit would bring upon the house only the shame of riot and recklessness, the ruin of unbridled extravagance, and the shadow of an already dishonoured name.

Gilbert his father trusted implicitly, with the simple faith of a man who is himself the soul of honour.

And now, at last, Wilfred stood between even them. This concealment of his brother, within their very gates, was the first deliberate act of deceit of which Gilbert Egerton had ever been found guilty towards his father.

As the elder man looked towards him now, with heavy, troubled eyes, the younger one cursed his brother in his heart. The flash of anger had faded from Mr. Egerton's face, and, as the lamplight touched it, Gilbert saw how old it had grown. The mask of pride and stoical endurance had fallen from it in this after-dinner talk with the son he trusted, and the pale face, usually rather stern, was lined and worn with suffering.

He had cast off his first-born, but not even Gilbert, until this moment, knew what it had cost him.

Instinctively, unconsciously probably, the young man rose, and going to his father's side, refilled his wineglass for him.

Mr. Egerton's hand, which had been stretched out to lift the decanter, fell back a little heavily on the table. It was trembling. His son saw it, and something rose in his throat as he sat down again in his own place.

His father, though outwardly he took no notice of his son's little act of service, perhaps vaguely felt the comfort of it.

"Thank Heaven I have you, Gilbert!" he said, in the curious heavy voice which was so different to his usual clear, decisive tones. "If I had discovered the smallest taint of his life"—all the horror and loathing he felt for his eldest son's wild career in his face—"in yours, I think it would have killed me. Perhaps it is because you have never lied to me, nor deceived me, nor tricked me, that I have come to set so much value on your truth. I can't tell you what, through all this horrible time, it has been to me."

Mr. Egerton had never spoken of his affection for this his second son before.

Quiet and undemonstrative both of them, the love and trust had been understood rather than expressed in words.

Gilbert gauged the change in his father, brought about by his brother's conduct, by this unusualness of speech.

He met for an instant the troubled eyes of his father, lightened only by that perfect confidence in himself, then glanced away through the open window into the starlit dusk of the summer night, in the direction where his brother was hiding.

"At first—I beg your pardon for it, lad," went on Mr. Egerton—"I almost fancied for a moment—but I was so mad with the disgrace of it, that I scarcely know what I did think—that you might really have known something of your brother's movements. That for your mother's sake— But," his voice quickened and strengthened again, as his horror of and hatred for Wilfred's sins burned into his soul, "I forbid you. He deserves his fate. I will not allow any of mine to interfere with justice. He has been a curse to our house. If you give him shelter here, you are no son of mine. His mother, Heaven help her, does not understand. She forgets the dishonour in his sufferings. But, Gilbert, you know what your brother's life has been to me—you will obey me in this!"

Gilbert Egerton's eyes came back to meet his father's face, turned to him in confidence that here in this his other son he would find pride and honour as strong as his own, and between him and his father Gilbert Egerton felt the presence of this, his first deceit—this lie unspoken.

"Gilbert!" Perhaps he read something in the young man's face. A strange, vague terror, a faint appeal shadowed the stern command in his own eyes.

"Promise me—you would not—you dare not, after I have trusted you. Speak—I order you—Gilbert—my son—"

Drops of moisture had gathered about the young man's pale mouth. But as, dumb with the torture of that instant's hesitation, he looked into his father's anguished, entreating eyes, he heard the clank of an overturned wineglass.

His father's hand, clenched on the table, had nervelessly opened. In its sudden horrible helplessness, it fell heavily against the glass his son had filled for him a few moments before. The overturned glass fell with a clash against a silver tray of sweets

near it, breaking, while the wine flowed over the table in a stain like blood.

Mr. Egerton sat still, looking at his son, but the trust, as well as the agonised questioning, were shut out by a dark veil of dull, staring blankness and unconsciousness.

"Father!" Gilbert ran to his side, "forgive me!" he began, but knowing already that his father could neither hear nor forgive.

It was the involuntary cry, wrung from his soul in the shock and terror of the moment; the vain effort to put away this first doubt between them.

When the frightened servants, in response to his call, came hurrying in a few moments later, they found their master struck down with paralysis. They carried him to his room, where for a whole fortnight he lay, to all intents and purposes, as one dead.

#### CHAPTER X.

DORNTON returned to town that evening. The next day he reported himself at Scotland Yard, and apparently made peace with his chiefs. He had various matters to see to during the course of the day, and it was not till evening that he made his way out to the sumptuously furnished mansion at Hampstead, to which the ex-oil and colourman had retired, and where he was now living, a little awed at the splendour of his own surroundings, secretly and considerably alarmed at the staff of smart servants who condescended to wait on him, and exceedingly lonely during the absence of his beloved daughter, for whom he had alone built and furnished the great house. But not for the world would he hasten the day for her to return.

He was dining in solitary grandeur, rather irritated than gratified, though outwardly he showed no signs of it—for Mr. Brown's manners were perfect in their way—by the gracious services of his butler and attendant footman, when, to his pleasure, Dornton was announced. It was the first visit Dornton had ever paid him in private life, and Mr. Brown, knowing him to be one of the busiest and least sociable men in London, was surprised as well as gratified.

He was considerably startled and disturbed, however, when he heard the purport of the visit. Dornton told him where he had been. He had come now to advise Mr. Brown to send for his daughter. He explained his singular request by say-

ing that he was convinced that she had been drawn into the plot for concealing Wilfred Egerton; and that, in fact, she was taking an active part in the matter.

Mr. Brown sat pale and troubled. He knew Wilfred Egerton well. He had made his acquaintance about ten years ago, and had taken a great liking to the young man. Two years before he had lost his own son, and the sense of his great loss was still so vivid that he felt a fatherly tenderness for all young lads of the same age. He was attracted, too, by the personal fascination that Wilfred Egerton possessed in those days for most people. The young man was in great trouble at the time. It was the first serious quarrel he had had with his father, who even then did not know the extent of his ill-doing, and he had been forbidden to return home until he promised to give up his evil courses. By an accident he became acquainted with Mr. Brown. The latter saved him at the time from disgrace and social ruin, and had since, on various other critical occasions, helped the spendthrift. Mrs. Egerton heard of his kindness through Wilfred himself, who seemed always to have a certain amount of gratitude and kindly feeling towards Mr. Brown. He had thoroughly understood the kindly, simple-hearted ex-tradesman, and had suggested, partly from a sense of cynical amusement, partly from a better motive, that his mother could not repay Mr. Brown's kindness to himself better than by showing some attention to his daughter, for whom, quiet and unostentatious himself, his ambitions were boundless.

Mrs. Egerton, great lady as she was, felt the deepest gratitude for the man who had stood by her son when his own world had turned against him. In her heart, too, though she was probably unconscious of it, was a doubt lest Mr. Brown, good as he had been, might still, not being of their own order, fail in delicacy and fidelity of feeling. Wilfred was completely in his power. He might be tempted, wanting in refinement and chivalry, to make use of his power. This undefined fear made her still more inclined to show her gratitude in the manner that would best satisfy Mr. Brown. She called on Hope while she was still at school, and was delighted with her. She saw her several times, and was more pleased each time. She had always longed for a daughter of her own. It ended in her

inviting the girl to stay with her on leaving school. Perhaps she would hardly have extended her gratitude so far had not she seen that Mr. Brown had far too much tact and good taste to take any advantage himself of her kindness to his daughter. Besides, except for the fact that he had made his money in trade, aided by lucky and clever speculations, there was no personal objection to be taken to him. He was intelligent and well-read, a natural nobility of thought and feeling reacting on speech and manner.

He gladly accepted the invitation. That she might abuse his confidence by throwing his daughter, so young and innocent, into the society of a man as notorious as Wilfred Egerton had of late years become, seemed impossible to his simple notions of rectitude and honour. He was no longer blinded by Wilfred Egerton's powers of personal charm; and to-day he believed him to be an unprincipled spendthrift and profligate, while the last crime laid to his charge had put him outside the pale of all honest men's society.

Dornton left Mr. Brown full of trouble and perplexity. His first impulse was to follow Dornton's advice. The next moment his confidence in Mrs. Egerton returned. Besides, the detective, who had given him a brief description of the affair, might be mistaken. It was hardly probable that Wilfred Egerton would attempt to find shelter in his father's house. Likely enough it was really Molloy who had shot the unfortunate gamekeeper.

Dornton owned that Molloy had not been seen since the affray. He had disappeared—the most natural corroboration of the fact that it was he who had shot Eason. But even the suspicion that Wilfred Egerton might be anywhere in the neighbourhood of his daughter, worried him so much that he could not sleep. Even at the risk of offending Mrs. Egerton and spoiling all Hope's social future, he felt that he must go down to Meadowlands, and take her away from any chance of a possible meeting with him.

Three months ago, Wilfred Egerton had been accused of stealing some valuable bonds. The owner, a rich Australian who had been an intimate associate of Wilfred Egerton's during the past year, sharing the follies and reckless dissipations of the young man, had been found one night insensible in his chambers. He had been stupefied by chloroform, from the effects of

which he had died half an hour after his discovery. From information given by his valet, who knew that his master had been to the bank that day, search was made, and the bonds in question, together with a valuable necklace of diamonds sent home that same day from the jewellers, were found missing.

There was considerable mystery about the whole affair. A woman was suspected to be mixed up with it, and though her identity was not yet established, a lady who bore a rather shady reputation in a fashionable shady set, was believed by the police to have been the closely veiled visitor who had called on Greenwood at his chambers the night of the robbery. So far, however, if this were the case, she had skilfully baffled the suspicions of the police.

To blacken the case against Wilfred Egerton, it transpired at the inquest that he knew his late friend had a weak heart. If, then, he had administered, or had had a share in administering, the chloroform, he was practically guilty of murder. Greenwood had only revived for a moment or two. He had muttered a few words, just caught by those who were trying to restore him to consciousness:

"Wilfred Egerton—bonds—stolen."

The dead man's valet deposed at the inquest that he had been sent, the evening of the robbery, by his master to some considerable distance on an errand that would keep him away some hours. His master had returned to his chambers, after dining at his club, and had sent his valet off at once. When the man returned about one o'clock, he found Mr. Greenwood insensible on the floor.

Though most of the evidence told considerably against Wilfred Egerton, it was not strong enough to convict him. He was let out on bail—two of his friends, who still believed in him, standing surety for a large amount. Dornton, though he had not imparted his suspicion to any one as yet, believed in his own mind that Lady Musgrave had something to do with

it, acting through one of the men who came forward.

Wilfred Egerton disappeared. Amid the scandal and doubt and anger his act roused, his cowardly flight, generally confirming public opinion of his guilt, a rumour was spread gaining a certain amount of credence, that his disappearance had something to do with the saving of a woman's name.

If he had stayed to stand his trial, a flood of publicity would have been thrown on the whole matter, which would have dragged others besides himself into notoriety.

When the morning came, Mr. Brown was still undecided as to how he should act. But a letter from Hope herself, telling him of a great trouble that had fallen on the house, comforted him a little. The letter was loving and truthful as ever. She said that until the Egertons gave her permission, she did not like to tell him all the facts of the case, but as soon as she was free to speak he should hear all about it. She did not mention Wilfred Egerton's name at all. She asked to be allowed to stay on as she seemed to be able to help M<sup>rs</sup>. Egerton a little, but owned that during the last day or two she had been feeling very home-sick, and had been longing to see him.

"Now that M<sup>rs</sup>. Egerton, who has been so good to me, is so unhappy, I do not like to leave her, but directly she can spare me, come for me, dearest father, for there is no one, after all, like our very own, and though I have had nothing but kindness here, I have missed you all through it!"

Mr. Brown felt that, so long as she could write to him such a letter as that, he need not fear for her truth and innocence.

A day or two later he heard of Mr. Egerton's dangerous illness.

He saw nothing more of Dornton, and as the days slipped by, and Wilfred Egerton remained uncaptured, he believed that for once the astute detective had made a mistake.

#### NOTE.

The Terms to Subscribers having their Copies sent direct from the Office: Weekly Numbers, 10s. 10d. the Year, including postage; and Monthly Parts, 12s. 6d.

Post Office Orders should be made payable to ALBERT SEYMOUR, 12, St. Bride Street, Ludgate Circus, E.C.

#### ADVERTISEMENT DEPARTMENT.

For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

*The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.*